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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/588,036

08/01/2006

Fumio Kato

043888-0495

3603

53080

7590

12/29/2009

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EXAMINER

LEE, CYNTHIA K

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1795

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/29/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/588,036	Applicant(s) KATO ET AL.	
	Examiner CYNTHIA LEE	Art Unit 1795	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 September 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Response to Amendment

This Office Action is responsive to the amendment filed on 9/9/2009. Claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 1 and 3-10 are pending. Applicant's arguments have been considered. Claims 1 and 3-10 are finally rejected for reasons of record and for reasons necessitated by applicant's amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (US 2005/0008936) in view of Yano (US 6235428) and Tanigawa (US 2002/0024041).

Takahashi discloses an alkaline battery comprising a positive electrode, a negative electrode and an alkaline electrolyte, said positive electrode including a positive electrode material mixture containing manganese dioxide and nickel oxyhydroxide [0072].

Regarding the limitation "electrolytic" manganese dioxide, it has been considered but was not given patentable weight because the courts have held that the method of forming the product is not germane to the issue of patentability of the product itself.

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Takahashi discloses that at least one of Zn, Co, and Mg can be dissolved in the nickel oxyhydroxide [0191]. Takahashi discloses a tap density of 2.0 to 2.5 g/cm³ after 200 taps [0057]. Regarding the number of taps, it is a method determining the number of taps. The Examiner notes that 200 taps of Takahashi and 500 of Applicant's taps would results in similar tap density.

Takahashi discloses an average particle size of 5 to 50 um [0069]. In the case where the claimed ranges "overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art" a prima facie case of obviousness exists. In re Wertheim, 541 F.2d 257, 191 USPQ 90 (CCPA 1976); In re Woodruff, 919 F.2d 1575, 16 USPQ2d 1934 (Fed. Cir. 1990). See MPEP 2144.05.

Takahashi does not disclose the average nickel valence. Yano teaches a nickel oxyhydroxide serving as the positive electrode active material preferably has a valence of nickel of 3.0 through 3.8 when fully charged. When the nickel oxyhydroxide has a valence of nickel smaller than 3.0, a sufficient discharge capacity is difficult to attain (4:35-40). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a nickel oxyhydroxide wherein the nickel has a valence of 3.0 or greater, as taught by Yano, for the benefit of obtaining sufficient discharge capacity. In the case where the claimed ranges "overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art" a prima facie case of obviousness exists. In re Wertheim, 541 F.2d 257, 191 USPQ 90 (CCPA 1976); In re Woodruff, 919 F.2d 1575, 16 USPQ2d 1934 (Fed. Cir. 1990). See MPEP 2144.05.

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Takahashi discloses that at least one of Zn, Co, and Mg can be dissolved in the nickel oxyhydroxide [0191], but does not disclose the amount of Mg. Tanigawa teaches of dissolving 3 wt% Mg in 100 parts by wt nickel oxyhydroxide [0085]. Elements are added to a positive active material to improve the capacity (See Table 2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add various amounts of dissolved elements for the benefit of increasing the capacity of the battery. Tanigawa clearly teaches that the dissolved element is a result effective variable. It has been held by the courts that discovering an optimum value or workable ranges of a result-effective variable involves only routine skill in the art, and thus not novel. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). See MPEP 2144.05.

Regarding claim 3, the amount of nickel oxyhydroxide is 30 wt%, thus the amount of manganese dioxide is 70 wt% [0074].

Regarding claim 4, said positive electrode material mixture further comprises graphite powder. See Abstract. The ratio of the active material and graphite is 10:1 [0046]. The ratio would be the same for the active material of manganese dioxide and nickel oxyhydroxide [0074]. Thus, the amount of said graphite conductive material is $1/(10+1)$, or 9% relative to the total amount of said manganese dioxide, said nickel oxyhydroxide and said graphite conductive material contained in said positive electrode material mixture.

Regarding claim 5, Takahashi does not disclose the electrode material mixture further comprising a rare-earth oxide. Yano teaches of adding a rare-earth compound, such as a Y_2O_3 , to the nickel oxyhydroxide active material (12:37, 65). The amount

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added is $1/(100+10+1)$, or 0.9%. Yano discloses that adding a rare-earth compound prevents battery leakage compared to battery C3 that does not contain a rare-earth compound (12:45, Table 8). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add a rare-earth compound, such as Y_2O_3 , for the benefit of preventing battery leakage.

Claims 6, 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (US 2005/0008936) in view of Yano (US 6235428).

Takahashi discloses an alkaline battery comprising a positive electrode, a negative electrode and an alkaline electrolyte, said positive electrode including a positive electrode material mixture containing manganese dioxide and nickel oxyhydroxide [0072].

Regarding the limitation “electrolytic” manganese dioxide, it has been considered but was not given patentable weight because the courts have held that the method of forming the product is not germane to the issue of patentability of the product itself.

Takahashi discloses that at least one of Zn, Co, and Mg can be dissolved in the nickel oxyhydroxide [0191]. Takahashi discloses a tap density of 2.0 to 2.5 g/cm³ after 200 taps [0057]. Regarding the number of taps, it is a method determining the number of taps. The Examiner notes that 200 taps of Takahashi and 500 of Applicant's taps would results in similar tap density.

Takahashi discloses an average particle size of 5 to 50 um [0069]. In the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. In re Wertheim, 541 F.2d 257, 191 USPQ 90 (CCPA 1976); In re Woodruff, 919 F.2d 1575, 16 USPQ2d 1934 (Fed. Cir. 1990). See MPEP 2144.05.

Takahashi does not disclose the average nickel valence. Yano teaches a nickel oxyhydroxide serving as the positive electrode active material preferably has a valence of nickel of 3.0 through 3.8 when fully charged. When the nickel oxyhydroxide has a valence of nickel smaller than 3.0, a sufficient discharge capacity is difficult to attain (4:35-40). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a nickel oxyhydroxide wherein the nickel has a valence of 3.0 or greater, as taught by Yano, for the benefit of obtaining sufficient discharge capacity. In the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art” a prima facie case of obviousness exists. In re Wertheim, 541 F.2d 257, 191 USPQ 90 (CCPA 1976); In re Woodruff, 919 F.2d 1575, 16 USPQ2d 1934 (Fed. Cir. 1990). See MPEP 2144.05.

Regarding claim 8, Takahashi discloses that the amount of nickel oxyhydroxide is 30 wt%, thus the amount of manganese dioxide is 70 wt% [0074].

Regarding claim 9, Takahashi discloses that said positive electrode material mixture further comprises graphite powder. See Abstract. The ratio of the active material and graphite is 10:1 [0046]. The ratio would be the same for the active material of manganese dioxide and nickel oxyhydroxide [0074]. Thus, the amount of said

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graphite conductive material is $1/(10+1)$, or 9% relative to the total amount of said manganese dioxide, said nickel oxyhydroxide and said graphite conductive material contained in said positive electrode material mixture.

Regarding claim 10, Takahashi does not disclose the electrode material mixture further comprising a rare-earth oxide. Yano teaches of adding a rare-earth compound, such as a Y_2O_3 , to the nickel oxyhydroxide active material (12:37, 65). The amount added is $1/(100+10+1)$, or 0.9%. Yano discloses that adding a rare-earth compound prevents battery leakage compared to battery C3 that does not contain a rare-earth compound (12:45, Table 8). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add a rare-earth compound, such as Y_2O_3 , for the benefit of preventing battery leakage.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (US 2005/0008936) in view of Yano (US 6235428) as applied to claim 6, further in view of Tanigawa (US 2002/0024041).

Takahashi modified by Yano teaches all the elements of claim 6. Takahashi discloses that at least one of Zn, Co, and Mg can be dissolved in the nickel oxyhydroxide [0191], but does not disclose the amount of the dissolved element. Tanigawa teaches of dissolving 3 wt% Mg in 100 parts by wt nickel oxyhydroxide [0085]. Elements are added to a positive active material to improve the capacity (See Table 2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

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invention was made to add various amounts of dissolved elements for the benefit of increasing the capacity of the battery.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 9/9/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that Tanigawa teaches an amount of 10.3 mol%, which is outside the claimed range.

In response, Tanigawa clearly teaches that the dissolved element is a result effective variable. It has been held by the courts that discovering an optimum value or workable ranges of a result-effective variable involves only routine skill in the art, and thus not novel. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). See MPEP 2144.05.

Generally, differences in concentration or temperature will not support the patentability of subject matter encompassed by the prior art unless there is evidence indicating such concentration or temperature is critical. “[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.” *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). MPEP 2144.05

Applicant notes improved results with the Mg content of 0.1 to 7 mol%.

In response, the appellants have the burden of showing that the claimed subject matter imparts unexpected results. In re Klosak, 455 F.2d 1077, 1080, USPQ (CCPA 1972). “[I]t is incumbent upon appellants to submit clear and convincing evidence to support their allegation of unexpected property.” In re Heyna, 360 F.2d 222, 228, 149 USPQ 692, 697 (CCPA 1966).

According to **MPEP 716.02**, applicants must further show that the results were greater than those which would have been expected from the prior art to an unobvious extent, and that the results are of a significant, practical advantage. Ex parte The NutraSweet Co., 19 USPQ2d 1586 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1991).

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cynthia Lee whose telephone number is 571-272-8699. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:30am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Cynthia Lee/
Examiner, Art Unit 1795

/Dah-Wei D. Yuan/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1795